

XXVI.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.**Balfour on Bird-Cult in Easter Island.*

[Some Ethnological Suggestions in regard to Easter Island, or Rapanui. By Henry Balfour. Folk-Lore, 1917, pp. 356-381.]

The main object of Mr. Balfour's paper is to throw some light on the relationship of the inhabitants of Easter Island in the south-eastern Pacific to other peoples, and he believes that some of their curious cults and implements show them to be connected with some of the Melanesian races of the extreme west of the Pacific. Incidentally he alludes to the interesting fact that the Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuliginosa*) is the object of an important "cult."

One of the regular breeding-places of this bird is the small rocky island of Moto Nui, lying off the south-west end of Easter Island itself. Mrs. Routledge, whose observations during a recent stay in Easter Island form the basis of Mr. Balfour's remarks, has described the great annual ceremony which is observed by the Easter Islanders, in which the main feature is a competition to secure the first egg of the season after the arrival of the Terns at their nesting-site. The lucky winner of the race becomes the "Bird-man" of the year and enjoys certain privileges, combined with some discomfort due to his being placed under a rigid tabu. The sacred egg is preserved in his house until the next season.

A somewhat similar cult is known in the Solomon Islands, where, however, the object is not the Sooty Tern but the Frigate-bird; and Mr. Balfour believes that the Easter Islanders' cult is derived from that of the Solomons, but that the bird was changed owing to the fact that the Frigate-bird does not breed in Easter Island.

The whole subject is one of considerable interest to the ornithologist as well as to the ethnologist, and for this reason we have drawn attention to the matter.

*Cory on American Birds.*

[Catalogue of Birds of the Americas. Part II. No. 1. By Charles B. Cory. Publ. Field Museum Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser., Chicago, xiii. 1918, pp. 1-315; 1 pl.]

It is the intention of Mr. Cory to catalogue all the birds of the New World from Alaska to Cape Horn, and the present volume, though not the first in classification, is the first in time to appear. It deals with the Owls, Parrots, Nighthawks, Swifts, and Humming-birds and their immediate allies, and forms a stout volume of over 300 pages.

The classification follows generally the lines laid down in Sharpe's Hand-list, and the nomenclature and arrangement is based largely on Ridgway's 'Birds of Middle and North America,' and on Brabourne and Chubb's 'List of the Birds of South America,' though differing from the latter work in the adoption of a trinomial grouping of the species.

Where any species is not described in Ridgway's great work or in the Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, a short definition of the species or subspecies is given in a footnote, thus enabling a worker to identify any American bird hitherto described with the aid of the three works. Full references are given to the original descriptions of both genera and species as well as to such works as contain coloured plates or monographs of groups or important papers on geographical distribution and taxonomy. There can be no doubt that Mr. Cory's Catalogue will be of the greatest value to all writers on American ornithology, and we are greatly indebted to him for having undertaken so laborious and useful a task.

We find the following new forms characterized for the first time, and would suggest that in future parts or volumes a list of these should be prefaced to the beginning of the work as it is difficult to disinter them:—*Speotyto cunicularia minor*, *Aratinga cactorum perpallida*, *Eupsittula pertinax margaritensis*, *Amazona amazonica tobagensis*, *Urospatha martii olivacea*, *Nephæctes niger guadeloupensis*, *Lepidopyga goudoti zuliae*, *Colubri iolatus brevipennis*.

The misprints appear to be rather more numerous than

they should be, and detract somewhat from the confidence that we should have in the accuracy of a work of this kind, though we confess that we have not found any that would seriously mislead the worker.

On p. 25 *Espiritu Santo* is printed *Espiruto*, p. 29 *Otus asio bendirei* is printed *bendieri*, p. 49 Bull. B. O. C. iii. should be Bull. B. O. C. i., p. 101 Humboldt is printed Humbold, and p. 103 Grinnell is printed Grinnel.

There are no doubt many others, but we have not made any special search for them, and we hope Mr. Cory will understand that we only draw attention to these so that more care in proof-reading be exercised in future parts or volumes.

#### *Despott's Maltese Bird Notes.*

[Ornithological Notes for the Maltese Islands (January-June 1917). By G. Despott, M.B.O.U. Arch. Melitense, iii. 1918, pp. 83-90.]

These notes are in diary form and chronicle the arrival and departure of the numerous migrants which pass the Maltese Islands on their way to and fro from their winter-quarters. No birds new to the islands were observed, but a number of Glossy Ibis appeared in the market on 26 April and a considerable flock of Grey Plovers passed over the island from the south-east on 9 May, and between the 22nd and 29th of June several flights of Cream-coloured Coursers arrived. On the other hand, the Rock-Thrush, Garden Warbler, and Whitethroat—usually abundant birds in spring—hardly appeared at all.

#### *Gurney's Recent Papers.*

[The Irruption of Waxwings into Norfolk during the winter of 1913-14. By J. H. Gurney, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. Trans. Norf. Norw. Nat. Soc. lx. 1915, pp. 773-774.]

[*Leucopternis occidentalis*. Id. *ibid.* p. 830.]

[Articles on Ornithology and Ornithological Reports from the County of Norfolk. By J. H. G. Pp. 1-8, 1918.]

A great immigration of Waxwings into the eastern counties of England took place in the winter of 1913-14,

and Mr. Gurney enumerates their progress and numbers in Norfolk in the short article the title of which is quoted above.

The second note deals with a rare Hawk described in 1876 by Salvin from Puna I., off the coast of Ecuador. Two examples of this rare species have recently been added to the Norwich Museum.

The third title is that of a pamphlet containing a list of Mr. Gurney's various papers on ornithological subjects, dating from 1866, when he contributed to 'The Ibis' a short note on "a variety of the Swallow," which he believed to be *Hirundo savignii*, but which was afterwards found to be a mistake (see B.O.U. List Brit. Birds, new ed. p. 330).

#### *Loomis on the Petrels etc.*

[A Review of the Albatrosses, Petrels, and Diving Petrels. By Leverett Mills Loomis. Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences, Fourth series, vol. ii. pt. ii. No. 12, pp. 1-187, pls. 1-17, April 22, 1918.]

This review is apparently based on the collection of Petrels made on account of the Academy at the Galapagos Islands in 1905-1906 by an expedition under the well-known collector, Mr. Rolls Howard Beck. The review consists of six parts, the first being a short historic sketch dividing the study of Petrels into four periods—the pre-Couesian, Couesian, Salvinian, and Godmanian. While fully agreeing that the pre-eminent student was Coues, the last period may not later be termed the Godmanian, as Godman's 'Monograph' was simply, as admitted by himself, the completion of Salvin's work. It is unfortunate that the present review scarcely passes the standard of the pre-Couesian period, as by usage of a rough lumping nature our knowledge of Petrels appears to belong to that period. The second part treats of geographic distribution in a superficial manner while the third consists of remarks on migration, which may be considered in relation to other data not approved of by the author. So little is known of the breeding-places and habits of Petrels that the exodus-migrations so surely spoken about are purely

hypothetical and problematically of little value. The writer, however, accepts that some species of Petrels are more or less sedentary, and the problems of Petrel migration must be considered in conjunction with geographical races. Loomis, however, concludes "Bird species are realities," and "In the present paper geographic variation is considered in connection with the other variations of species, the subspecies theory being discarded as a theory that has outlived its usefulness." As a matter of fact, geographic variation is not dealt with at all, probably the real reason being lack of specimens—a very potent factor. The Academy Collection is said to number over two thousand, and at the time of writing constituted the largest collection of these birds in the United States. As, however, about nineteen hundred skins are recorded for sixteen species from the Galapagos and adjoining seas, the poverty of such a collection may be more correctly estimated by the admission that about a hundred species have been described and there were about a hundred or so skins to consider their validity by. Consequently the fourth part, dealing with Variation, is more or less the result of study of this feature in this one locality. The results must be contrasted with those secured elsewhere, before any conclusions can be fairly provided. A majority of moulting birds appear to have been studied, and conclusions based on these without consideration as to their breeding-place. Further, these were often killed in the breeding-season, though many thousands of miles distant from any known breeding-place of their species; and this points to their aberrant nature, probably being non-breeding birds of the year or physically unfit. Dichromatism is given a big place throughout, any unrecognized variation being put down to this cause.

The fifth part, dealing with Classification and Nomenclature, certainly shows novel features, which in other cases might be attributed to atavism: thus, "I heartily agree with Dr. Reichenow that the genealogy of birds is a subject to be considered apart from their classification." The novelty cannot be recommended when such results as the lumping of *Diomedea exulans* with *chionoptera* and *regia* are the

outcome. The two species of *Phaebetria* are ignored as being probably dichromatic phases, while all the Prions are lumped as one species, the confession "the series before me is a meagre one" referring to sixteen specimens, though a qualifying sentence reads "Ample series from breeding-stations alone will determine the precise nature of the variations." The results of such study have been wilfully ignored, and consequently the value of Loomis's lumping is depreciated.

The sixth part deals with the material collected on the Pacific Ocean adjacent to North America and the Galapagos Islands and contains a little of general interest, though generally the close attention to moult and neglect of subspecies lowers the value of the conclusions propounded. Thus *Puffinus obscurus* is utilized to cover several "book species" which had not been seen or examined, the results being entirely based upon over a hundred specimens from the Galapagos alone. In this group such conclusions are as useless as are the majority of those presented in this paper. It is unfortunate that the methods employed are so confusing; otherwise the record of *Procellaria parkinsoni* in Galapagos waters would have been clearly put forward, and we should have understood that apparently a form of this species breeds on the group or along the American coast.

Study of the paper as a whole confirms the opinion that we know little of the breeding-habits of Petrels, and that there is still a great deal to be done in this connection at the Galapagos Islands. A peculiar confirmation of the ideas proposed, that these "migrant" Petrels are not such, is seen in connection with *Oceanodroma furcata* where breeding colonies of the supposed "north-bound migrants" have been found off the California coast. The recognition of species, without subspecific differentiation, cannot be successfully applied to this group in the present state of our knowledge, as shown by the recognition of *Puffinus auricularis* and *P. opisthomelas* as distinct species, while lumping *Pterodroma sandwichensis* under *P. phaeopygia*, the differences in the latter case being much greater and more constant than in the former. According to the author's own stated views

the two former cannot possibly be "realities," though they possibly are. In conclusion, the views propounded, while worthy of consideration, must meet with little acceptance until confirmed by examination of material—an item lacking in the review noticed.

T. I.

*Macoun on the Birds of Canada.*

[Catalogue des Oiseaux du Canada. Par John Macoun et James M. Macoun. Pp. xii+909. Ottawa (Imp. du Gouv.), 1915. 8vo.]

This well-known work was first published in 1909, and was noticed in our pages (*Ibis*, 1910, p. 556). The present edition is a French translation of the original one, without any further additions. It seems a great pity that the opportunity of correcting and adding to the former edition should not have been made use of, as a good deal of work on Canadian ornithology has been done since 1909; still we hope the present volume will be found useful to the French-speaking inhabitants of Canada, and that a new edition of this valuable work will be undertaken before many years have elapsed.

*Mathews on Australian Birds.*

[The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Vol. vii. pt. 1, pp. 1-112, pls. 225-234. London (Witherby), March 1918.]

In this part the author introduces us to what are commonly known as Picarian Birds, beginning with his Orders, PODARGIFORMES, CAPRIMULGIFORMES, CORACIFORMES, and ALCEDINIFORMES, which will be followed, as in Dr. Sharpe's Classification, by MICROPODIFORMES, CUCULIFORMES, and MENURIFORMES. It will be noticed that Sharpe only allowed the groups subordinal rank, while we shall not be surprised if Mr. Mathews eventually parts the abnormal *Menura* from this alliance.

The names of the Families follow those of the Orders, except that a second family, *Ægothelidæ*, is recognized under the Podargine assemblage, and another, *Dacelonidæ*, under the Kingfishers. In regard to genera, *Podargus* auctt. is split into three, viz. *Megapodargus* (for *papuiensis*), *Podargus* (for

*strigoides*), and *Micropodargus* (for *ocellatus* and *plumiferus*). The extralimital *Batrachostomus* ought probably, we are told, to be similarly treated; while *Ægotheles* is divided into that genus proper and *Euægotheles* now newly propounded.

*Podargus strigoides* requires several pages of synonymy, which is very carefully worked out. To give two instances: *P. strigoides*, *megacephalus*, and *gracilis* depend upon three drawings of the same specimen; *P. humeralis*, *stanleyanus*, and *cuvieri* represent one species from the Linnean Society's collection. The species of former authors are often merely recognizable as subspecies; and these, with Mr. Mathews's own (including two new phases, *centralia* from Central Australia and *capensis* from Cape York), number no fewer than thirteen, among which *rossi* at least differs in its comparatively small eggs.

The controversy as to the sounds made by this well-known bird is not yet finally decided—that is, whether it cries “boobook,” like the Owl of that name. Good authorities differ; but we should like to suggest that this is probably a question of “personal equation,” and that, where two birds utter hooting notes, these may sound like “boobook” to one man and not to another. Surely the varying opinions point to the whole question being a matter of degree only, and that the cries if heard simultaneously would be unmistakable.

Under *Micropodargus* the “species” *ocellatus* and *marmoratus* are stated to be identical, while *plumiferus* loses its subspecies *neglectus*. Under *Ægotheles cristata*, again, we have seven subspecies, with four that are new, and *rufa* discarded. As a specific name *cristata* just antedates *novæ-hollandiæ*, of which *leucogaster* and *vittatus* are synonyms.

Of the Coraciiformes we only have in Australia the “Dollar-bird,” *Eurystomus orientalis*, synonymous with *pacificus*, and even the subspecies *bravi* is cancelled.

A thorough discussion is given of the divisions of the Alcedinidæ with reference to the views of former writers, and especially Miller in the United States. As, however,



Alcedininæ and Daceloninæ alone occur in Australia, the status of other possible subfamilies hardly affects the present part; Mr. Mathews accepts both, while demurring to the present method of defining the latter subfamily.

The genus *Alcyone* is used for the species *azurea*, and five subspecies are allowed (of which *diemenensis* used to stand as a species) besides some seven that are extralimital, two being new. They lead to a good deal of consideration, as do those of the next species, *Micralcyone pusilla*, where three are allotted to Australia, *yorki* being new. Several former names are shown to be synonyms.

Several new genera are next propounded for non-Australian forms, viz. *Cyanonyx* for *lepida* and its nearest allies, *Ceycalcyon* for *cyanopterus*, *Argyronyx* for *argentata*, *Ispidella* for *leucogaster*, and *Ceycoides* for *madagascariensis*. *Therosa* is, moreover, accepted for *sotitaria* and *meeki*, while their relationships are fully discussed.

The part ends with *Syma*, where *flavirostris* is taken as a subspecies of *torotoro*; but further details are to be given in the following part of this work.

#### *Murphy on Oceanites.*

[A study of the Antarctic *Oceanites*. By Robert Cushman Murphy. Bull. Amer. Mus. N. H. New York, xxxviii. 1918, pp. 117-146.]

The main object of this paper appears to be to controvert Mr. Mathews's suggestion that there are two forms of Wilson's Petrel—one in the south Atlantic and one in the north. This is, of course, a new suggestion, as it has been generally acknowledged that Wilson's Petrel breeds in the southern hemisphere and makes a trans-equatorial migration during the (northern) summer months to the north Atlantic. Mr. Mathews, however, relying mainly on his belief in the comparative non-migratory habits of Petrels and other "Tubinares," is confident that the Wilson Petrels of the north Atlantic breed in some hitherto overlooked colonies in the West Indian or North African Islands. This appears to us to be carrying *à priori* reasoning rather

too far, and we would consider that it is up to Mr. Mathews to find the breeding-place first before writing about it.

Anyhow, Mr. Murphy disagrees with Mr. Mathews, and supports the old orthodox views of the trans-equatorial migration, and marshalls his facts and observations to prove his theme, though he does not seem to be able to substantiate the occurrence of the Petrel in the equatorial belt. Incidentally he describes the plumages and moults of *Oceanites*, including a juvenile plumage hitherto unnoticed, characterized by white edgings to the feathers of the belly and by a whitish spot on the lores. Further, he has something to say on the migration, breeding, and food-habits, as observed by him on his voyage to South Georgia and back in 1912-13. The paper is illustrated by some photographs of birds taken from ship-board or from skiffs.

#### *Swarth on Californian Jays.*

[The Pacific coast Jays of the genus *Aphelocoma*. By H. S. Swarth. Univ. Cal. Publ., Zool. xvii. 1918, pp. 405-422.]

In this review of the Jays of the genus *Aphelocoma* Mr. Swarth deals with a problem that frequently shows itself when careful comparisons are made of a wide-ranging species which can be divided into several geographical races. In this case a race inhabiting the southern half of the peninsula of Lower California, though so distinct from another (*Aphelocoma c. californica*) inhabiting the northern portion of the peninsula as to induce Mr. Swarth to regard it as a distinct species (*Aphelocoma hypoleuca*), yet is practically indistinguishable from another subspecies (*A. c. immanis*), found much farther north in the Sacramento Valley, north of the San Francisco region. The only satisfactory explanation appears to be that this is a case of parallel modification along the same lines, and that it does not really indicate racial relationship. There are many other instances of the same phenomenon, and all workers on subspecific forms are familiar with such. Mr. Swarth discusses the relationship of the various races at some

length, and subsequently reviews the various forms recognized by him, illustrating their distribution with a sketch-map. He proposes to recognize one new subspecies, *A. californica oocleptica*, from the coast region of California north of San Francisco Bay.

*Swarth on the Birds of Arizona.*

[Notes on some birds from central Arizona. By H. S. Swarth. Condor, xx, 1918, pp. 20-24.]

During the summer of 1917 Mr. Swarth spent some weeks in central Arizona, where it is traversed by a scenic highway known as the "Apache Trail," between Globe and Phoenix. It is an interesting region, as it appears to be the meeting-place of several Mexican species here reaching their northern limit and certain Rocky Mountain forms which do not go farther south. A list of the more interesting forms met with is given.

*Theobald and others on the food of the Rook, etc.*

[Reports on the food of the Rook, Starling, and Chaffinch. By F. V. Theobald, W. McGowan, and H. S. Leigh. Suppl. to the Journ. of the Board of Agriculture, May 1915, pp. 1-56.]

The study of economic ornithology of vast importance to agriculture has been hitherto woefully neglected in the British Islands, especially when we realize what a great deal has been done in this matter on the other side of the Atlantic, and we are glad to see that the Board of Agriculture has at last taken the matter up and issued what can only be regarded as a preliminary report.

Messrs. Theobald and McGowan's report, which is separately presented from that of Mr. Leigh, deals with the stomach-contents of 277 Rooks, 748 Starlings, and 527 Chaffinches, not a very large number, perhaps, on which to base final conclusions, especially as no nestlings appear to have been examined.

On the whole, the balance appears to incline against the Rook as destroying great quantities of grain, while it does

very little in the matter of devouring injurious insects. The Starling seems to have a better record, as it kills and eats a number of injurious insects and molluscs. In regard to the economic status of the Chaffinch, the authors seem to be rather dubious, but they are inclined to look upon it as neutral. It is mainly insectivorous in the summer months, and feeds on grain and weed-seeds in the autumn and winter.

Altogether, the reports do not seem to help one to any very definite conclusions; probably a great many more observations must be recorded before anything satisfactory can be deduced.

#### *Thorburn's 'British Birds.'*

[British Birds: written and illustrated by A. Thorburn, F.Z.S. Supplementary Part, with two plates in colour. London (Longmans), 1918. 4to.]

We understand that the demand for Mr. Thorburn's beautiful work on British Birds has been so great that the publishers have been compelled to issue a new edition before the completion of the first, and the present supplementary part which is included in the new edition is issued separately to those who are the fortunate possessors of the first.

In it are illustrations of some of the birds recently recorded as having been taken in Great Britain for the first time, such as *Sylvia rüppelli* and *Luscinola melanopogon*, as well as of some which have recently been shown to be distinct from previously known forms, such as *Turdus hebridensis*, *Parus hibernicus*, and *Parus kleinschmidti*.

The two plates are worthy successors to those already issued and should be obtained by all those who are the happy possessors of the previous volumes.

#### *Wetmore's recent papers.*

[A new Honey-eater from the Marianne Islands. By Alexander Wetmore. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, vol. 30, 1917, pp. 117, 118.]

[The relationships of the fossil bird *Palæochenoides mioceanus*. Id. Journ. Geol. Chicago, xxv. 1917, pp. 555-557.]

[An abnormal egg of *Fulica americana*. Id. Condor, xix. 1917, pp. 65-66.]

[A note on the tracheal air-sac in the Ruddy Duck. Id. *ibid.* xx. 1918, pp. 19, 20.]

[On the fauna of Great Salt Lake. Id. Amer. Nat. li. 1917, pp. 753-755.]

In the first of these short notes the Red Honey-eater of the Marianne Islands is separated from that of the Caroline Islands under the name *Myzomela rubratra saffordi*, subsp. n.

In the second note Mr. Wetmore points out that in his opinion the fossil bird *Paleochenoides*, founded on the distal end of a femur from Miocene Beds in South Carolina, is not anserine in relationship, as believed by the describer, Dr. Shufeldt, but steganopodine; and probably close to *Pelecanus*.

The third note contains an account of a somewhat abnormal Coot's egg, which was laid after the bird had been captured alive, and the abnormal shape and colouring is attributed to excitement and fear, and their reaction on the oviduct through the nervous system.

The tracheal air-sac of the Ruddy Duck is a subject about which Mr. Wetmore has previously written; some additional information is here given, proving that the air-sac in question is confined to the male sex and that it is not deflated when the bird is diving, and that considerable pressure is necessary to do so. The control of the outward flow of air is effected by the sterno-trachealis muscle, and there is no sphincter.

The last note controverts a recent statement by Dr. C. T. Vorheis that the Brine Shrimp (*Artemia*) and the Alkali Fly (*Ephydra*), so abundant in certain parts of the Great Salt Lake of Utah, are without enemies. Mr. Wetmore finds that these two organisms form the greater part of the food of several species of Ducks, such as the Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*), the Golden-eye (*Clangula c. americana*), and the Green-winged Teal (*Nettion carolinense*).

*S. A. White on the Birds of Central Australia.*

[Results of the South Australian Museum Expedition to Strzelecki and Cooper Creeks, September and October, 1916—*b* (Aves). By S. A. White. Trans. R. Soc. S. Austr. xli. 1917, pp. 441-466, pl. xxxi.]

[In the Far North-east: A scientific expedition. By Capt. S. A. White, M.B.O.U., R.A.O.U.; pp. 1-144, many photos. Adelaide. 8vo.]

Capt. White's last journey into the interior of Australia was in August 1916. Accompanied by Mr. Waite, of the Adelaide Museum, he travelled by train to Farina, about 350 miles north of Adelaide, whence he trekked with horses, camels, and Afghans north-eastwards past Mount Lyndhurst, Mount Hopeless, and Lake Cullibone to Innamincka, near the New South Wales border on Cooper Creek, where Burke the explorer perished in 1861. He returned to the railway by a more northern line along the Cooper Creek. As the Cooper is more often in flood than any other creek in the central region, Capt. White hoped to find bird-life abundant, but in this he was a good deal disappointed, and birds were very scarce.

A new Tree-creeper (*Climacteris waitei*) was, however, obtained on the Cooper, and the nest and eggs of *Ashbyia lovensis* were taken for the first time. In all, about 106 species of birds were collected, and the range of many of these was considerably extended.

The first title quoted is that of the scientific results of the expedition, and contains a list of the species procured; the second title is that of a small volume containing a popular account of the journey and of the incidents that occurred.

*Bird-Lore.*

[Bird-Lore. An illustrated bi-monthly magazine, devoted to the study and protection of birds. Edited by Frank M. Chapman. Vol. xix. Nos. 1-6 for 1917.]

By far the best of all the popular bird magazines, 'Bird-Lore' continues to flourish under the able guidance of Mr. F. M. Chapman, who, we learn from a paragraph on p. 215 of the present volume, has given up his work at the New

York Museum temporarily to undertake at Washington the duties of Director of the Bureau of Publications of the American Red Cross. He has found time, however, to write a notice on the plumages of the American Wrens and of the American Swallows to accompany coloured plates by Mr. Fuertes illustrating these birds, while in the case of the latter group we have an additional article by Mr. Oberholser on their migrations.

There are a large number of more popular articles, generally illustrated with good photographs, dealing with American birds under every aspect.

'Bird-Lore' is also the official organ of the powerful National Association of Audubon Societies, which is a central organization having branches or affiliated societies in practically every State in the Union, the object of which is the protection of birds by education, by legislation and by other means. A good proportion of the matter in 'Bird-Lore' is devoted to this propaganda, which has certainly had a wonderful effect in rousing the people of the United States to the importance of bird protection, not only for sentimental, but for economic reasons.

### *British Birds.*

[*British Birds.* Vol. xi., June 1917–May 1918. London (Witherby).]

In November last Mr. H. F. Witherby accepted a commission in the R.N.V.R., and as this involved his absence from England, he had temporarily to relinquish the editorship of 'British Birds.' His place has been taken by the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, who had previously acted as Assistant Editor. We understand that Lieut. Witherby is doing exceedingly good work where he is now stationed and is undoubtedly assisting to "get on with the war," and we wish him all good luck.

Perhaps the most important articles in the present volume of 'British Birds' are those on moult. Mr. Witherby himself, before he left England, published two contributions on the moults of the British Warblers and Thrushes. These

birds all have a postnuptial moult, and often a spring moult as well, though there is a good deal of variation in this respect, even among birds of the same genus.

Miss Annie Jackson has taken up the same subject in regard to the British Waders, and four parts of her work are printed in the present volume. In the first contribution she divides Waders into three classes according to the extent of the prenuptial moult. (1) Those in which the moult is partial and confined to the body-feathers, such as the Lapping and Woodcock. (2) Those in which some of the wing- and tail-feathers are involved as well, as is the case with the majority of the Waders. (3) Those in which all the remiges and rectrices, as well as the body-feathers, are renewed, as in the Stints and the Common and Spotted Sandpiper. Each genus is reviewed in detail, and the results are very interesting. In another paper she gives us some information as to when, in the case of migrant Waders, the two moults take place, whether on the breeding-grounds or in the winter quarters or during actual migration. No one interested in moult and plumage change should fail to read these papers of Lieut. Witherby and Miss Jackson.

Other articles of interest in the present volume deal with the life-history of the Hobby, by the late Capt. C. S. Meares and by Capt. Ashley, of the Kingfisher by Mr. W. Rowan, of the Moorhen by Frances Pitt; while a paper by Lieut. D. H. Meares on the Marsh Warbler is illustrated with a coloured plate by Mr. C. E. Arnold, a new departure, if we mistake not, in 'British Birds.'

The second authentic record of the occurrence of the Buff-backed Heron (*Ardeola ibis*) in the British Islands is detailed by Mr. F. W. Snelling. The bird, a male, was shot on Breydon Marshes, in Norfolk, on 23 October, 1917, and was mounted by Mr. E. C. Saunders, of Great Yarmouth.

To the late Mr. C. J. Alexander, who was recently killed at the front, we are indebted for two papers on Italian ornithology. The first deals with the altitudinal distribution of birds in the mountains of central Italy. This is a



subject which has received much more attention in America than in Europe, and deserves further study. The second contribution deals with the singing of birds in their winter quarters, and on migration as observed in central Italy.

Finally, Capt. Hugh S. Gladstone presents us with a copious biographical and bibliographical study of John Hunt (1777-1842), a Norwich ornithologist as well as stationer, schoolmaster, engineer, and taxidermist, who migrated to America, where he died. He was the author of 'British Ornithology,' an unfinished work and now one of the rarest of bird-books, only five copies of which are known to Mr. Mulleus.

### *Cassinia.*

[*Cassinia*. A Bird Annual. Proceedings of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club. No. xxi. for 1917. Philadelphia, 1918.]

The last number of 'Cassinia' has as a frontispiece a portrait of the late Mr. Samuel Wright and a eulogistic biography of this promising young Philadelphian ornithologist, who died after an attack of pneumonia early last year, at the age of 41, by Mr. Witmer Stone. During the earlier part of his life he worked with Mr. Stone at the valuable collection of birds belonging to the National Academy of Sciences; later on he entered business, but always kept up his love of birds, and contributed several articles to 'Cassinia.'

An article by Mr. T. D. Carter deals with the summer birds of the attractive Pocono Lake region up the Delaware River, where many birds not found in the plains country round Philadelphia breed.

It is a remarkable fact that the Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona v. vespertina*), which breeds in the pine-forests of the central parts of the North American continent, has of late years extended its winter wandering to the Eastern sea-board States, where formerly it was practically unknown, and Mr. S. Scorville contributes a pleasant account of his meetings with this bird in the winter months

of 1916-17. For some reason or other the first observers of this Grosbeak, Schoolcraft and Major Delafield, in the Lake Superior District in the early twenties of the last century, believed that it only appeared at twilight, and hence its names—the specific one due to Wm. Cooper and the generic one to Bonaparte. Both refer to this supposed peculiarity, which, however, has no existence in reality.

The last article, compiled from records made by members of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club by Mr. Stone, deals with the spring migration of 1917 in the Philadelphian area. It alludes to the abundance of Hudsonian Chickadees and Evening Grosbeaks, and also to the lateness of the May migrants, due probably to an abnormal spell of cold during the first half of that month.

### *El Hornero.*

[El Hornero. Revista de la Sociedad ornitológica del Plata para el estudio y protección de las aves de la Argentina y países vecinos, Tomo i. N. 1, Octubre 1917. Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Buenos Aires.]

We welcome the appearance of a new contemporary Journal of Ornithology from the Argentine. It is named after one of the most characteristic birds of the pampas, called the Oven-bird by English-speaking people, El Hornero by the Spaniards, *Furnarius rufus* by systematic ornithologists. It builds a nest of mud as large as a baker's oven on a horizontal branch of a tree, hence its name, and is figured in a little cut on the wrapper of the new Journal.

The Editor of 'El Hornero' is Dr. Roberto Dabbene, of the Buenos Aires Museum, and after a short introduction on the constitution and prospective work to be undertaken by the new society, he contributes an account of the Swifts found in Argentina, with a key to the genera and series of figures illustrating the generic characters modelled on those to be found in Ridgway's works, together with a list of species with full references. In another article, also by the editor, is an account of a collection of birds recently made on the little island of Martin Garcia lying in the estuary of

the Plate river. It contains notes on taxonomy and distribution, and a carefully worked-out synonymy with full references.

Prof. M. Doello-Jurado, who is also we believe connected with the Buenos Aires Museum, contributes an interesting account of a journey recently made by him to Puerto Deseado in Patagonia. This spot is perhaps better known to English readers as Port Desire, and was visited by Darwin in 1834 during his voyage in the 'Beagle.' On some of the islets off this coast there breeds the Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) in countless numbers, reminding the writer of this notice of similar islands off the coast of South Africa where the allied *S. demersus* is to be found. With them was noticed *Phalacrocorax vigua* nesting in the branches of the stunted trees and bushes, while another species of Cormorant (*P. gaimardi*) builds its nests against the cliffs in an entirely different situation. Photographs of the Penguins and of *P. gaimardi* and its eggs illustrate this article.

In a paper entitled "Distracciones ornitológicas," Señor M. Selva proposes a new classification of birds, based, so far as we can make out, on their general habits, and he sets down his results on a rather formidable diagrammatic table, which however we confess, owing probably to our ignorance of the Spanish language, we cannot properly appreciate.

We hope that 'El Hornero' will continue and prosper and advance our knowledge of South American birds, and we wish it a long and useful career.

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*List of other Ornithological Publications received.*

Auk. (Vol. xxxv. No. 2, 1918.)

Avicultural Magazine. (Third Series, Vol. ix. Nos. 6-8, 1918.)

Bird-Lore. (Vol. xx. No. 2, 1918.)

Condor. (Vol. xx. No. 2, 1918.)

Irish Naturalist. (Vol. xxvii. Nos. 4-5, 1918.)

Journ. Bombay N. H. Soc. (Vol. xxv. No. 3, 1918.)

Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus. (Vol. viii. pt. iv. 1917.)

Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam. (Vol. ii. No. 4, 1917.)

Scottish Naturalist. (Nos. 76-77, 1918.)